The mind of Jim Garrison—a central character in the Kennedy story

PSYCHO

JEREMY CAMPBELL

WASHINGTON, Friday.—Only a few days after declaring in a nationally televised news conference that President Johnson knew the real names of the men who assassinated President Kennedy, New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison woke today to find his army medical records splashed over the front pages of several American newspapers.

The records, made available by the Pentagon and the Army Record Centre in St. Louis, show that Garrison was discharged from the Service as totally unfit for military duty.

A report to the Evaluation Board from an army medical centre at San Antonio, Texas, is quoted at length.

It says, in part: "This patient has a severe and disabling psychoneurosis of long duration. It has interfered with his social and professional adjustment to a marked degree. He is considered totally disabled from the exemption of military duty and moderately incapacitated in civilian employability. His illness existed prior to his call to active duty and is of the type that will remain for a long term and probably permanently."

Garrison underwent psychotherapy, the report revealed, in October 1958, by a psychiatrist on the staff of the Louisiana State University Medical School in New Orleans, and continued the treatment for a total of four and a half years.

'I've solved it'

Another statement by a medical examining board at the same hospital recommended that Garrison be classified as "10 per cent permanent disability." The Board described the incapacity as "chronic anxiety reaction manifested by hypochondria, phobia of enclosed places, and psychosomatic allergic manifestations."

The records disclose that Garrison was under the care of Dr. Roger Matthews, psychiatrist on the staff of Louisiana University, after his discharge from the Army in 1961.

He said that he was allowed to enter the National Guard after his case had been reviewed by the Surgeon General of the Army, but a spokesman of this unit has resigned, giving as his reason for leaving "incompetent command."

He suggested

Garrison burst on the world stage last February, when he announced that he had solved the assassination of President Kennedy. He claimed that the murder was the result of a conspiracy by a group of people working with Lee Harvey Oswald. He arrested Clay Shaw, a retired businessman, as a part of the conspiracy.

Earlier this week he issued a warrant for the arrest of an executive named Roger Eugene Bradley, who, like Shaw, denies having any connection with the case.

Garrison abandoned his field last month, by saying that the trail had stopped off about two thousand miles, and still took the credit and claiming that President Johnson was concealing the names of the real killers.

The publication of his medical and psychiatric history, given considerable importance in the Press today, is certain to embarrass Garrison, who has long accused the Government of hindering his investigation and damaging his credibility.

It has frequently been hinted that Garrison went through a period of instability in the Army, but this is the first time that his complete records have been opened to the public and his illness mentioned in detail.

Garrison served five years in the Army during the Second World War. In 1951, after a brief stint with the FBI, he volunteered for active duty in Korea. He was given his medical discharge in the following October.

Jim Garrison

Canada puts virtual end to hanging

OTTAWA, Friday.—Canada today virtually ended capital punishment for murder.

The House of Commons on December 1, after a passionate debate during which the Minister of Justice, Mr. Larry Pennell, called that a murderer given a life term must serve at least 25 years before parole is considered, voted to abolish hanging for murder.

101 hanged

Of the 101 people hanged in Canada for murder since confederation in 1867, no fewer than 21 teenagers have died on the gallows since 1950.

The last man hanged was Ronald Turpin, executed in Toronto on December 11, 1962, for the murder of a policeman. Six others are at present in Death Row, but none was sentenced for murdering a police officer or prison guard. Their sentences will likely be commuted to life imprisonment.

The Garrison Story

I am greatly disturbed by your Dec. 29 article on the medical records of New Orleans District Attorney James Garrison. This kind of "psychiatric smear" is irrelevant and destructive. Also, medical records are confidential documents, and should not be made public merely because they come into the hands of a reporter. Good medical care requires free and open communication between doctor and patient; this communication can be free and open only if both parties are confident that the records of their communication will remain private. Your article destroys this confidence. By printing it, you have done a disservice to Mr. Garrison and to society.

ROBERT PERLMAN, M.D.
Washington.

What right do you have to publish the medical records of James C. Garrison?

The article of Dec. 29, on page one of The Washington Post describing Mr. Garrison's medical history is the epitome of irresponsible journalism. Regardless of how these records were obtained, your decision to publish them indicates a lack of good judgment on your part. By publishing this information, you have become a party to a slander campaign against Mr. Garrison.

If you disagree with Mr. Garrison's behavior, you have every right to say so, but your attempt to discredit his mental capability is reminiscent of the practices of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy.

PAUL W. MARSHALL.
Alexandria.

We are currently witnessing attempts by certain members of the mass media and Governmental officials at different levels to gradually discredit, by various reprehensible methods, the man, New Orleans District Attorney James Garrison, and his work concerning the Kennedy assassination.

Maybe at last these vicious tactics may backfire and point up 1) the paradox of the ideal of freedom of speech and the suppression, by almost all means, of those who would attempt to speak freely, and, 2) the oft-used cliche "where there is smoke, there is fire."

There are those of us who were skeptical of Garrison's findings, but the latest assassination of his character has caused us to renew our concern in the case.

Our concern may not be appreciated, and our voices may be ignored, because we may not really be free, but that should not stop us from acting like we are free persons.